

Remarks

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections set forth in the above-mentioned Official Action in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-27 remain pending in the application, with Claims 1-4 and 8-13 being independent. Claims 1-4, 8-13 and 20 have been amended herein.

Claims 1, 8, 12-15, 19, 20 and 24-27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Japanese Laid-Open Patent Application No. 2000-326531 (Kyogoku et al.) in view of Japanese Laid-Open Patent Application No. 62-088736 (Suematsu et al.). Claims 2-4, 9-11, 16-18 and 21-23 were rejected under § 103 as being unpatentable over Kyogoku et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,135,591 (Ikeda et al.). Claims 5-7 were rejected under § 103 as being unpatentable over Kyogoku et al. in view of Suematsu et al. and further in view of Japanese Laid-Open Patent Application No. 11-277879 (Yamaoka). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Kyogoku et al. relates to a thermal transfer recording apparatus for recording on a recording sheet having perforations. A recording area by the recording head is set to exceed an area of the perforations.

Suematsu et al. relates to an automatic paper feeder including a separation claw for separating only the topmost sheet of a stack.

Ikeda et al. relates to an image forming apparatus including a sheet discharging roller.

Yamaoka relates to a recording medium that can be separated into plural pieces. Waste areas for separation are provided outside the peripheries of the unit printing pieces. As noted previously, Applicants also submit that Yamaoka discloses printing beyond a perforation.

The Examiner also refers to, but does not explicitly apply, "Goichi and Onishi". Presumably, Onishi refers to U.S. Patent No. 6,173,649 (Onishi). This patent describes a sheet-like printing medium that can be easily separated into separate portions. Goichi may refer to Yamaoka, which has been described above.

It is respectfully submitted that none of these citations disclose or suggest important features of the present invention recited in the independent claims.

For example, none of the citations, whether taken individually or in combination, discloses or suggests that both of the separation means and the feeding means are in (will be brought into) contact with the separable discard area when the separation means contacts the front end portion of the print medium fed by the feeding means, as is recited in independent Claims 1, 4, 8, 12 and 13.

Nor do any of the citations disclose or suggest that the print medium is restrained by both the transport means and the discharge means when the printing means is at the frontmost end of the print medium and is performing printing onto an area including a portion of the print area and a portion of the separable discard area, as is recited in independent Claims 2, 4 and 9.

Furthermore, none of the citations are believed to disclose or suggest that the print medium is restrained by both the transport means and the discharge means when

the printing means is at the rearmost end of the print medium and is performing printing onto an area including a portion of the print area and a portion of the separable discard area, as is recited in independent Claims 3, 4, 10 and 11.

The Examiner suggests that any dimensions of the print areas and discard areas would have been obvious based on whatever final printed product is desired. It is respectfully submitted, however, that the dimensions of the medium with respect to dimensions of the apparatus would not have been obvious absent Applicants disclosure.

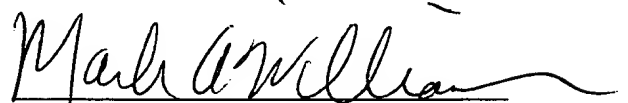
Thus, independent Claims 1-4 and 8-13 are patentable over the citations of record. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the § 103 rejections are respectfully requested.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the present invention is patentably defined by independent Claims 1-4 and 8-13. Dependent Claims 5-7 and 14-27 are also allowable, in their own right, for defining features of the present invention in addition to those recited in their respective independent claims. Individual consideration of the dependent claims is requested.

Applicants submit that the present application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration, withdrawal of the rejections set forth in the above-noted Office Action, and an early Notice of Allowance are requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,


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